

The Mediating Role of Motivation and Conflict of Interest in the Effect of Managerial Leadership and Communication on the Performance of Ad Hoc Bodies of the General Elections Commission (KPU) of Nduga Regency

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ABSTRACT

The performance of ad hoc electoral management bodies is a decisive factor for electoral integrity at the field level. However, research on these organizations in geographically extreme regions remains limited and has generally not framed them as temporary organizations. This study aims to examine the effects of managerial leadership and communication on the performance of the ad hoc bodies of the General Elections Commission (KPU) of Nduga Regency, both directly and through the mediation of conflict of interest and motivation, using quantitative methods. Employing a quantitative approach with 105 respondents drawn from ad hoc body members, the data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the aid of SmartPLS. The results indicate that communication is the strongest predictor of performance ($\beta = 0.449$; $p < 0.001$), followed by motivation ($\beta = 0.263$) and managerial leadership ($\beta = 0.220$). Conflict of interest exerts a negative effect ($\beta = -0.119$). The model accounted for 91.3% of the variance in performance. Motivation emerged as the most dominant mediator ($\beta = 0.154$), whereas conflict of interest mediated only the communication–performance path and failed to mediate the leadership path. The study concludes that strengthening organizational communication is the most effective strategy for enhancing performance while simultaneously mitigating conflicts of interest within temporary electoral management organizations operating in geographically and socially challenging regions.

Keywords: Managerial Leadership, Organizational Communication, Work Motivation, Conflict Of Interest, Electoral Management Body Performance

INTRODUCTION

The quality of electoral management is largely determined by the capacity of the institutions that administer it. An electoral management body is responsible for carrying out technical procedures and safeguarding the integrity and legitimacy of electoral outcomes (James et al., 2019). The performance of such institutions depends on the quality of the personnel who implement the electoral stages in the field, making human resources crucial to ensuring credible elections (James, 2019). In developing democracies, the challenges of electoral management become increasingly complex when compounded by infrastructural constraints and difficult geographical conditions (Oni et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, the implementation of elections at the field level relies on ad hoc bodies temporarily established by the General Elections Commission (KPU)—namely, the District Election Committees, Voting Committees, and Polling Station Working Groups. These ad hoc bodies serve as the frontline of electoral management, as they interact directly with voters at every stage of the process (Pandiangan, 2019). However, their performance is frequently constrained by heavy workloads, limited experience, and stringent integrity demands (Haryadi et al., 2022). These challenges become even more acute in regions characterized by extreme geographical conditions, where coordination and supervision are difficult to carry out (Subekti et al., 2021).

Several studies suggest that employee performance in public sector organizations is shaped by the quality of leadership and communication. Effective managerial leadership enhances performance through appropriate direction, coordination, and decision-making, with work motivation serving as the linking mechanism (Baskara & Suwandana, 2025; Suyani et al., 2025). Organizational communication also plays a pivotal role, functioning not only as a channel for information but also as a variable that directly influences organizational outcomes (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019; Garnett et al., 2008). Furthermore, effective leader–subordinate

communication appears to enhance motivation and mobilize work behaviour (Madlock & Sexton, 2015; Sun et al., 2016).

Conversely, the performance of public organizations may be undermined by conflicts of interest. In their systematic review of conflict of interest in public administration, Jafari Nia et al. (2023) argue that this phenomenon generally stems from information asymmetries and inter-actor relationships rather than authority structures alone. Conflict of interest reduces the objectivity of decision-making and impedes work effectiveness, making its management an essential component of good governance (Boyce & Davids, 2009; Cerrillo-i-Martínez, 2017). In electoral management bodies, vulnerability to conflict of interest increases owing to political pressure and social relationships at the local level.

Although the relationships among leadership, communication, motivation, and performance have been extensively examined, two research gaps remain. First, studies on the performance of ad hoc electoral management bodies in Indonesia have tended to be descriptive and view such bodies through the lens of permanent bureaucracy and technical workload (Haryadi et al., 2022; Pandiangan, 2019), without framing them as temporary organizations possessing distinctive coordination characteristics and working mechanisms (Bakker et al., 2016a; Lundin & Söderholm, 1995). However, in temporary organizations, coordination mechanisms tend to be more decisive than permanent hierarchies (Fernandes et al., 2018). Second, prior research has generally tested a single mediation path in isolation; therefore, the relative strength of motivation versus conflict of interest in bridging the effects of leadership and communication on performance has not yet been established comparatively (Asmiadi et al., 2022; Niswatin & Soelistya, 2024).

These gaps are particularly salient in Nduga Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province. The region presents geographical challenges in the form of mountainous terrain with limited transportation access and constrained communication networks, together with social characteristics marked by strong kinship ties, clan affiliations, and the influence of customary leaders. This combination of geographical and social challenges creates a distinctive context for electoral management that has remained largely unexplored in the literature on human resource management and electoral administration. This context makes it possible to examine whether the patterns of influence of leadership and communication on performance still hold or whether they reveal mechanisms that differ from the findings in conventional permanent organizations.

Based on this review, the present study tests ten hypotheses. With respect to direct effects, managerial leadership is hypothesized to have a negative effect on conflict of interest (H1); communication is expected to have a positive effect on motivation (H2); managerial leadership (H3) and communication (H4) are expected to have positive effects on performance; conflict of interest is hypothesized to have a negative effect on performance (H5); and motivation is expected to have a positive effect on performance (H6). With respect to indirect effects, conflict of interest is hypothesized to mediate the effects of managerial leadership (H7) and communication (H8) on performance, whereas motivation is hypothesized to mediate the effects of managerial leadership (H9) and communication (H10).

This study aims to test all these hypotheses within the ad hoc bodies of the KPU of Nduga Regency. This study make both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this study offers novelty by comparatively testing two mediation paths within a single model thereby identifying which mediator is more dominant while also framing ad hoc electoral management bodies as temporary organizations, thus bridging the study of electoral administration with temporary organization theory. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a basis for formulating strategies to improve the performance of election organizers in regions facing complex geographical and social challenges.

METHODS

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative approach using explanatory research, which aims to test causal relationships among variables, as well as the role of mediating variables in the constructed model. The research design is oriented toward examining the effects of managerial leadership and communication on the performance of ad hoc bodies, both directly and through conflict of interest and work motivation as mediators. The research model comprises two exogenous variables, two mediating variables, and one endogenous variable, thereby forming a structural equation model tested using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach (Hair et al., 2019).

Populasi dan Sampel

The study population consisted of all members of the ad hoc bodies of the General Elections Commission (KPU) of Nduga Regency, including the District Election Committees (PPD), Voting Committees (PPS), Polling Station Working Groups (KPPS), and supporting secretariat staff. The research sample comprised 105 respondents obtained through a census technique. This sample size satisfies the minimum sample size

requirement for PLS-SEM analysis, namely, ten times the largest number of structural paths directed at a single endogenous construct. Respondent characteristics included division/unit, sex, age, educational level, position, and length of service.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument was developed based on indicators for each research variable. Managerial leadership was measured using four dimensions: planning, organizing, directing, and controlling. Communication was measured through the dimensions of interpersonal, vertical, and horizontal communication, and communication media and channels. Conflict of interest was measured through the dimensions of role conflict, pressure and workload, and interpersonal conflict. Motivation was measured through the dimensions of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and achievement drive. Finally, the performance of ad hoc bodies was measured through the dimensions of work quality, quantity and timeliness, discipline and compliance, capability and initiative, and cooperation and professionalism. The validity and reliability of the instrument were assessed through the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model), as described in the data analysis section.

Data Collection Technique

Primary data were collected by distributing questionnaires to all respondents. The questionnaires were administered in person, considering the geographical conditions of Nduga Regency, which is characterized by limited communication networks. Prior to completing the questionnaire, respondents were briefed on the study objectives and procedures for completing the instrument to ensure a shared understanding.

Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS software. The analysis was conducted in two stages: First, the measurement model (outer model) was evaluated to assess construct validity and reliability, encompassing convergent validity (outer loading and average variance extracted AVE), discriminant validity (cross-loading and the Fornell–Larcker criterion), and construct reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability). Indicators were deemed valid when outer loading values exceeded 0.70 and average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeded 0.50, whereas constructs were deemed reliable when Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded 0.70. Second, the structural model (inner model) was evaluated, encompassing the coefficient of determination (R-squared), predictive relevance (Q-squared), and model fit indices (goodness of fit assessed through SRMR and NFI). Hypothesis testing was performed using a bootstrapping procedure, comparing the t-statistic against a t-table value of 1.96 at the 5% significance level; the hypothesis was supported when the t-statistic exceeded 1.96 and the p-value was below 0.05. Mediation testing was conducted to assess the role of conflict of interest and motivation as linking variables.

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

The study involved 105 respondents who were members of the KPU's ad hoc bodies in Nduga Regency. By division, the majority of respondents belonged to the administrative unit (85.71%). In terms of sex, most respondents were male (70.48%), with the remainder being female (29.52%). With respect to age, the largest group fell within the 36–45 age range (55.24%), followed by the 46–55 age range (34.29%). Educational attainment was dominated by high school/vocational school graduates (79.05%), while bachelor's degree holders accounted for 17.14%. By position, the largest proportions were staff members (33.33%), treasurers (29.52%), and KPPS chairpersons (28.57%). In terms of length of service, most respondents had served for 3–5 years (48.57%). The complete profile is presented in Table 1

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics (n = 105)

Characteristic	Dominant category	Frequency	Percentage
Division/Unit	Administration	90	85.71%
Sex	Male	74	70.48%
Age	36–45 years	58	55.24%
Education	High school/Vocational	83	79.05%
Position	Staff	35	33.33%
Length of service	3–5 years	51	48.57%

Descriptive Analysis of Variables

The results of the descriptive analysis show that managerial leadership obtained the highest mean value (4.22; "strongly agree" category), followed by communication (4.21; "strongly agree"), motivation (4.20; "agree"),

performance of ad hoc bodies (4.14; "agree"), and conflict of interest (4.05; "agree"). These values indicate that the respondents' perceptions of all variables fell within the high category. The summary is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Category
Managerial Leadership	4.22	Strongly Agree
Communication	4.21	Strongly Agree
Motivation	4.20	Agree
Performance of Ad Hoc Bodies	4.14	Agree
Conflict of Interest	4.05	Agree

Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The measurement model was evaluated using 19 indicators comprising five latent constructs. The convergent validity test showed that all indicators had outer loading values above 0.70, ranging from 0.861 to 0.960. The average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded 0.50, ranging from 0.823 to 0.894, thereby satisfying the requirement for convergent validity. The reliability test indicated that all constructs had Cronbach's alpha values (0.896–0.960) and composite reliability values (0.935–0.971) exceeding the 0.70 threshold, confirming their reliability. The complete results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of Convergent Validity and Reliability Testing

Construct	Indicators	Outer Loading	AVE	Cronbach's α	CR
Managerial Leadership	KEP1–KEP4	0.921–0.960	0.894	0.960	0.971
Communication	KOM1–KOM4	0.910–0.938	0.857	0.944	0.960
Conflict of Interest	KF1–KF3	0.861–0.937	0.828	0.896	0.935
Motivation	MOT1–MOT3	0.934–0.938	0.876	0.929	0.955
Performance of Ad Hoc Bodies	KJ1–KJ5	0.888–0.938	0.823	0.946	0.959

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larker criterion. The results show that the square root of the AVE for each construct (diagonal values) exceeds the inter-construct correlations in the corresponding columns and rows. Accordingly, all constructs satisfied the discriminant validity criterion. The test results are listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Fornell–Larker Criterion

	ML	PERF	COM	COI	MOT
Managerial Leadership (ML)	0.946				
Performance of Ad Hoc Bodies (PERF)	0.849	0.907			
Communication (COM)	0.794	0.915	0.926		
Conflict of Interest (COI)	–0.675	–0.749	–0.682	0.910	
Motivation (MOT)	0.734	0.862	0.799	–0.666	0.936

Evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model)

The structural model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R-squared), predictive relevance (Q-squared), and model fit indices. The R-square value for the performance of ad hoc bodies was 0.913 (the "strong" category), indicating that 91.3% of the variance in performance can be explained jointly by managerial leadership, communication, conflict of interest, and motivation. Motivation had an R-square value of 0.665 ("moderate"), and conflict of interest a value of 0.513 ("moderate"). The Q-square values for all endogenous variables were above zero (performance = 0.737; motivation = 0.570; conflict of interest = 0.409), indicating that the model had satisfactory predictive relevance. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination and Predictive Relevance

Endogenous Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted	Q-square
Performance of Ad Hoc Bodies	0.913	0.910	0.737
Motivation	0.665	0.659	0.570
Conflict of Interest	0.513	0.504	0.409

The model fit indices yielded a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of 0.043 for the estimated model, which is below the 0.08 threshold and indicates a good model fit. The normed fit index (NFI) of 0.892

further supports the adequacy of the model for the hypothesis testing.

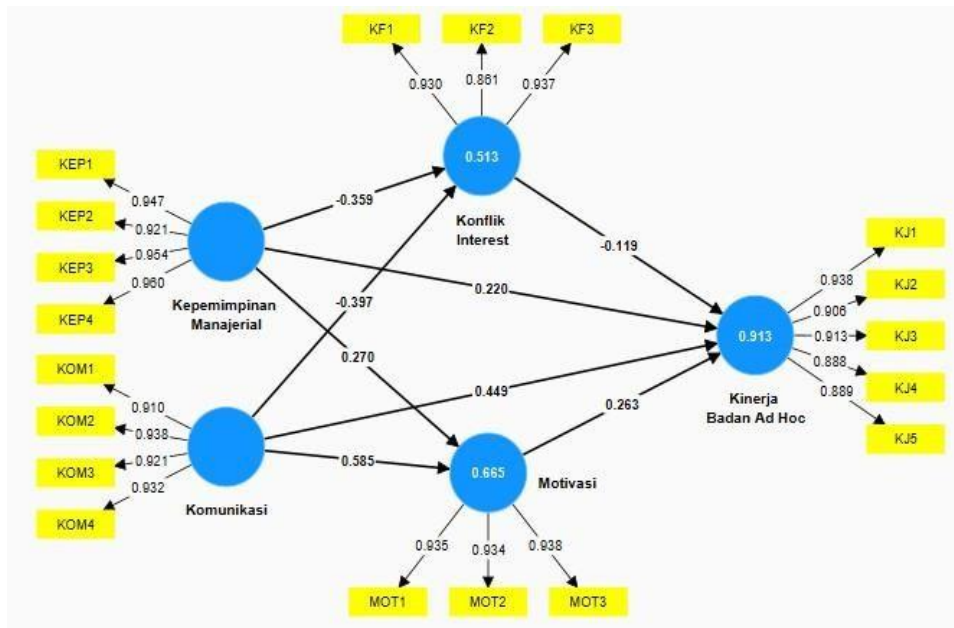


Figure 1. Structural model resulting from PLS-SEM

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using a bootstrapping procedure with the criteria of a t-statistic > 1.96 and a p-value < 0.05 . The results for the direct effects show that all five direct-effect hypotheses were supported. Managerial leadership had a significant negative effect on the conflict of interest ($\beta = -0.359$; $t = 2.871$; $p = 0.004$). Communication had a significant positive effect on motivation, with the largest coefficient ($\beta = 0.585$; $t = 8.578$; $p < 0.001$). Regarding the performance of ad hoc bodies, communication was the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.449$; $t = 8.148$; $p < 0.001$), followed by motivation ($\beta = 0.263$; $t = 6.138$; $p < 0.001$) and managerial leadership ($\beta = 0.220$; $t = 4.387$; $p < 0.001$), whereas conflict of interest had a significant negative effect ($\beta = -0.119$; $t = 2.503$; $p = 0.012$).

The results for the indirect effects showed that three of the four mediation paths were supported. Conflict of interest did not mediate the effect of managerial leadership on the performance of the ad hoc bodies ($\beta = 0.043$; $t = 1.570$; $p = 0.117$). In contrast, conflict of interest mediated the effect of communication on performance ($\beta = 0.047$; $t = 2.037$; $p = 0.042$). Motivation mediated the effect of managerial leadership on performance ($\beta = 0.071$; $t = 2.194$; $p = 0.028$) and the effect of communication on performance, with the largest coefficient among all indirect paths ($\beta = 0.154$; $t = 4.979$; $p < 0.001$). A summary of all the hypothesis tests is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-statistic	p	Decision
Direct Effects					
H1	ML $\rightarrow$ COI	-0.359	2.871	0.004	Supported
H2	COM $\rightarrow$ MOT	0.585	8.578	< 0.001	Supported
H3	ML $\rightarrow$ PERF	0.220	4.387	< 0.001	Supported
H4	COM $\rightarrow$ PERF	0.449	8.148	< 0.001	Supported
H5	COI $\rightarrow$ PERF	-0.119	2.503	0.012	Supported
H6	MOT $\rightarrow$ PERF	0.263	6.138	< 0.001	Supported
Indirect Effects					
H7	ML $\rightarrow$ COI $\rightarrow$ PERF	0.043	1.570	0.117	Not supported
H8	COM $\rightarrow$ COI $\rightarrow$ PERF	0.047	2.037	0.042	Supported
H9	ML $\rightarrow$ MOT $\rightarrow$ PERF	0.071	2.194	0.028	Supported
H10	COM $\rightarrow$ MOT $\rightarrow$ PERF	0.154	4.979	< 0.001	Supported

Note: ML = managerial leadership; COM = communication; COI = conflict of interest; MOT = motivation; PERF = performance of ad hoc bodies.

DISCUSSION

This study found that managerial leadership and communication are the primary determinants of the performance of ad hoc bodies, with communication being the strongest predictor. Motivation was the most dominant mediator, whereas conflict of interest mediated only the communication–performance path and failed to mediate the leadership path. This asymmetric pattern lies at the heart of the discussion, as it demonstrates that two seemingly comparable exogenous variables operate through distinct psychological and structural mechanisms.

Communication as the Dominant Determinant of Performance

The finding that communication is the strongest predictor of performance ($\beta = 0.449$) reinforces the literature that positions organizational communication as a driver of public sector performance. Garnett et al. (2008) demonstrated that communication is not merely an information channel but a variable that directly influences the outcomes of government organizations. This result is also consistent with Diamantidis & Chatzoglou (2019), who identified communication clarity as one of the most decisive factors in employee performance across organizational contexts.

The dominance of communication appears to be closely linked to the geographical characteristics of the Nduga Regency. In a region with limited transportation access and uneven communication networks, the accuracy and timeliness of information flow are decisive for the success of each electoral stage. This condition parallels the findings of Oni et al. (2025) regarding electoral administration in security-challenged regions, which identify coordination and communication as critical variables. These findings suggest that the role of communication is amplified in electoral contexts marked by substantial infrastructural constraints.

Motivation as the Strongest Psychological Bridge

The path from communication to performance via motivation constituted the strongest indirect effect in the model ($\beta = 0.154$). This finding is consistent with motivating language theory, which holds that a leader's language and interactions can mobilize subordinates' work behaviour (Madlock & Sexton, 2015; Sullivan, 1988). Sun et al. (2016) affirm that the quality of leader–subordinate communication is directly correlated with motivation, while Pincus (1986) had earlier demonstrated the association between communication satisfaction and performance. The present study extends this body of evidence to the previously unexamined domain of management organizations.

Motivation also mediates the effect of managerial leadership on performance ($\beta = 0.071$), reinforcing the findings of several recent studies in the Indonesian and Asian contexts. Suyani et al. (2025), Baskara & Suwandana (2025), and Khatimah et al. (2025) consistently reported a mediating role of motivation in the leadership–performance relationship. The contribution of this study lies in situating both mediation paths within a single model, thereby enabling a comparison of their relative strengths. This comparison reveals that motivation operates more strongly when triggered by communication than by leadership, —a finding that has rarely been established in the prior mediation literature (Asmiadi et al., 2022; Niswatin & Soelistya, 2024).

The Asymmetric Mediation of Conflict of Interest

The most striking finding is the asymmetry in the role of conflict of interest: this variable mediates the communication–performance path ($\beta = 0.047$) but fails to mediate the leadership path ($\beta = 0.043$; $t = 1.570$). This challenges the common assumption that effective leadership enhances performance primarily by suppressing conflict. In contrast, the results indicate that the influence of leadership operates predominantly through direct channels—via direction, coordination, and decision-making—rather than through the reduction of conflict of interest.

An explanation for this asymmetry can be traced to the relational nature of conflicts of interest. In their systematic review of conflict of interest in public administration, Jafari Nia et al. (2023) argue that conflicts of interest arise largely from information asymmetries and inter-actor relationships rather than from authority structures. Communication acts directly on such information asymmetries; therefore, it is unsurprising that communication can suppress conflicts of interest and, in turn, enhance performance. In contrast, leadership operates on a structural dimension that does not directly address the relational sources of conflict, which may explain why its mediation path was not significant. This argument is consistent with Boyce & Davids (2009) Cerrillo-i-Martínez (2017), who identify information transparency—rather than leadership authority—as the principal instrument for preventing conflicts of interest in the public sector.

The context of Nduga Regency supports this interpretation. The strength of kinship ties, clan affiliations, and the influence of customary leaders creates a potential for conflict of interest that originates in social relationships rather than in weak leadership structures. In such circumstances, open organizational communication regarding codes of conduct and procedures constitutes a more relevant mitigating mechanism than merely strengthening leadership authority. Moreover, the presence of layered oversight from the Regency

KPU and Bawaslu, together with the enforcement of the electoral organizers' code of ethics, appears to constrain the scope for conflict of interest, thereby limiting its contribution as a mediation path (Nauryzbek & Bokayev, 2025; Ochoa & Graycar, 2016).

Ad Hoc Bodies as Temporary Organizations

The temporary organization framework offers a theoretical lens that accounts for the overall patterns of the findings. Ad hoc electoral management bodies exhibit the features of a temporary organization as formulated by Lundin & Söderholm (1995) namely, formation around a time-bounded task, temporary teams, and rapid transitions. In organizations of this kind, formal and informal coordination mechanisms become more decisive than permanent hierarchies (Bakker et al., 2016b; Fernandes et al., 2018). This helps explain why communication as an instrument of coordination predominates, whereas leadership operates directly without relying heavily on conflict management.

This perspective offers a conceptual contribution, given that the literature on the performance of electoral organizers in Indonesia has generally viewed ad hoc bodies through the lens of permanent bureaucracy and technical workload (Haryadi et al., 2022; Pandiangan, 2019). By framing them as temporary organizations, this study connects the study of electoral administration with the broader body of temporary organization theory (Burke & Morley, 2016; Sydow & Windeler, 2020) while complementing macro-level research on the integrity and capacity of electoral management bodies (James, 2019; James et al., 2019; Jerhov & Högström, 2024).

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study makes two contributions. First, it demonstrates that motivation is a stronger mediator than conflict of interest in explaining the formation of performance, thereby enriching the literature on mediation in organizational behaviour research. Second, it frames ad hoc electoral management bodies as temporary organizations, bridging two hitherto separate fields of inquiry: electoral administration and temporary organization theories.

Practically, the findings direct the KPU of Nduga Regency to prioritize strengthening internal communication systems regular coordination, clarity of instructions, and information transparency as the most effective strategy for enhancing performance while simultaneously mitigating conflicts of interest. Strengthening managerial leadership remains important, but its impact is optimized when it is explicitly directed toward providing direction and fostering work motivation rather than solely controlling conflict.

Limitations of the Study

This study had several limitations. First, the data were derived from respondents' perceptions through a questionnaire and may therefore be susceptible to common method bias. Second, the study was cross-sectional and confined to a single regency; therefore, generalizing the findings to regions with different characteristics warrants caution. Third, the conflict of interest construct was measured through self-perception, which may not fully capture sensitive dimensions of the phenomenon.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should employ a longitudinal design to capture the dynamics of performance across electoral stages and expand the sample across multiple regencies to test the robustness of the model. Developing additional mediating variables, such as organizational commitment or trust, may also deepen our understanding of the mechanisms underlying the formation of ad hoc body performance in temporary public sector organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that managerial leadership and communication are the primary determinants of the performance of the ad hoc bodies of the KPU of Nduga Regency, with communication serving as the strongest predictor, and the model accounting for 91.3% of the variance in performance. Of the two mediating variables, motivation functions as the most dominant mediator, whereas conflict of interest mediates only the communication–performance path and cannot mediate the managerial leadership path. This asymmetric pattern underscores the novelty of this study, —namely, that the influence of leadership on performance operates predominantly through direct channels, while communication enhances performance both directly and indirectly by mitigating conflicts of interest and strengthening motivation.

The study's original contribution lies in the comparative testing of two mediation paths within a single model and in framing ad hoc electoral management bodies as temporary organizations, thereby bridging the study of electoral administration and temporary organization theory. Practically, the findings recommend that the KPU of Nduga Regency prioritize strengthening open and well-coordinated internal communication systems as the most effective strategy for enhancing performance while safeguarding the integrity of electoral management in regions facing complex geographical and social challenges.

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